



Wellness-Fitness

Program Newsletter

March 2008



Take the National President's Challenge

The National President's Challenge is a six week physical activity challenge designed to get Americans up and moving. The official launch of the National President's Challenge is March 20, 2008 and the program continues through May 15, 2008. Everyone can join the Challenge and it's easy to do.

Registration is free. You can sign up individually or as part of a group of friends, family, or coworkers. You can support each other and compare your progress online with others in your group, your own age, in your city, state or in the United States.

You can belong to as many groups as you like. Join Federal Occupational Health in taking the challenge. Upon registration, enter "65393" for the *Group ID Number*, and "FOH newsletter" for *Group Member ID/Name* (where you heard about the program). If you are already registered for the president's challenge, to join TEAM FOH, simply log in, select the *Your Groups* tab, fill in the registration information under the *Join a Group*, and press *update*.

After you register, you can log in each day to track your daily activities using the Challenge's online personal activity log. The National President's Challenge lets you choose from almost 100 different activities.

Your goal is to see how many points you can earn by being active. You'll earn points for every activity you log. Points are based on the amount of energy each activity burns. So the more active you are, the more points you'll get.

To complete the Challenge, youth aged 6-17 are encouraged to aim for at least 60 minutes of activity, five days a week, while adults 18 and older are encouraged to get at least 30 minutes of activity, five days a week.

Getting 30-60 minutes of activity a day may seem daunting, but the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports offers some tips to make it easier.

- Stand up and walk while on the phone.
- Take stairs instead of elevators.
- Park farther away from the entrance.
- Get off the bus a stop earlier and walk the difference.
- Take a long walk instead of a long lunch.
- Start with small steps. Walk 2,000 steps a day; work up to 10,000 steps or more a day.

Register today at www.presidentschallenge.org and join the nation in getting fit!

"Don't wait for your ship to come in; swim out to it."

- Author unknown

How Much is Enough?

Measuring Exercise Intensity

Aerobic exercise helps you maintain weight, burn calories, and condition your heart and cardiovascular system. The CDC and the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) recommends at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise on 5 or more days of the week. So just how hard should you work to reach moderate “intensity?”

Exercise *intensity* refers to how hard your body is working during physical activity. There are a variety of ways to measure your exercise intensity so you can make sure you’re getting the most out of every workout.

You can take your pulse several times and multiply to determine heart rate, calculate complex formulas based on metabolic equivalents and kilocaloric conversions, or you can make it easy with the Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE) scale or Borg scale, named for its creator, Gunnar Borg.

The Borg scale is a 15-point subjective rating scale. The scale begins with the number 6, which is equal to sitting down or doing nothing, 9 would be a slow stroll, 13 would be exercising at steady pace, and 19/20 reflects the hardest possible effort you’ve ever made.

To rate your level of intensity using the Borg scale while exercising; just rate your level of effort. If the exercise feels easy (less than 12), you can increase your pace. If it feels strenuous (14 or greater), slow down a bit. For moderate intensity, exercise should feel somewhat hard (12-13).

Once you become familiar with the Borg scale, judging your RPE will be easy. And there are many advantages to using the Borg RPE. It’s free, doesn’t require that you stop exercising,

and helps you stay in tune with how you’re actually feeling during physical exercise.

If you would like help in designing a safe and effective exercise program, check with your Federal Occupational Health Wellness/Fitness professional. And remember, before beginning an exercise program you should consult your primary care physician for a medical evaluation.

Borg Scale

- 6 No exertion at all
- 7
- Extremely light (7.5)
- 8
- 9 Very light
- 10
- 11 Light
- 12
- 13 Somewhat hard
- 14
- 15 Hard (heavy)
- 16
- 17 Very hard
- 18
- 19 Extremely hard
- 20 Maximal exertion

For more information on measuring the intensity of exercise visit

www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/measuring/index.htm

Sleep Well to be Well

According to the National Sleep Foundation (NSF), Americans are working more and resting less. NSF's 2008 *Sleep in America* poll, found that extended work days, which interfere with sleep, are causing people to suffer from daytime sleepiness – even to the point of dozing at work.

Daytime doldrums aren't the only problem. Losing as much as one hour of sleep can take its toll on your body. Sleeplessness can not only affect memory and ability to concentrate, but can also have serious health consequences and even safety risks.

How much sleep do you need? While sleep needs vary between adults, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) National Heart Lung and Blood Institute (NHLB) recommends between seven and nine hours of sleep for adults. Less than seven hours can be enough to compromise concentration and cause daytime drowsiness. For example, too little sleep is linked with:

- Increased risk of motor vehicle accidents
- Weight gain – due to an increased appetite caused by sleep deprivation
- Increased risk of diabetes and heart problems
- Unstable mood
- Decreased ability to pay attention, react to signals or remember new information

Tips for a better night's sleep

- Avoid caffeine (coffee, colas, tea, chocolate), and alcohol before bedtime.

- Avoid nicotine for two to three hours before bedtime.
- Exercise regularly, but finish your workout at least three hours before bedtime.
- Clear your mind before bed. If you have a lot on your mind and it's distracting you from sleep, try jotting it down on a list to help get it off your mind so you can focus on sleep, not activities.
- Keep your bedroom dark, cool, and quiet. Darkness is a cue for your body to sleep.
- Turn alarm clocks to face away from you to avoid waking up in the night and worrying about losing sleep.
- Wake up at around the same time every day – even on weekends. This way your body will get tired at the same time every evening.
- If you wake up in the middle of the night and can't fall back to sleep, get out of bed and return only when you are sleepy.

For more information:

Read the NSF's 2008 *Sleep in America* Poll at www.sleepfoundation.org

Learn more about sleep and your health. Visit the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Website at www.cdc.gov/sleep/index.htm

Download the NHLB *Your Guide to Healthy Sleep* at:

www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/sleep/healthy_sleep.pdf

Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

Colorectal cancer is the second most deadly cancer among BOTH men and women. It is also one of the most easily prevented because it typically is a slow growing cancer, and if detected early is very treatable. Most colorectal cancers begin as a polyp. At first, a polyp is a small, harmless growth in the wall of the colon. However, as a polyp gets larger, it can develop into a cancer that grows and spreads. Routine screenings can catch cancer early when treatments are most effective.

Like most cancers, the risk of developing colorectal cancer increases with age. For most people, screening for colorectal cancer should begin at age 50 and continue at regular intervals. People should talk with their health care provider about when to begin screening for colorectal cancer, what tests to have, the benefits and risks of each test, and how often to schedule appointments.

According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), beginning at age 50, both men and women should follow one of these five testing schedules:

- yearly fecal occult blood test (FOBT) or fecal immunochemical test (FIT)
- flexible sigmoidoscopy every 5 years
- yearly FOBT* or FIT, plus flexible sigmoidoscopy every 5 years
- double-contrast barium enema every 5 years

- colonoscopy every 10 years
- All positive tests should be followed up with colonoscopy.

The ACS also advises checking with your doctor about starting colorectal cancer screening at an earlier age if you have any of the following colorectal cancer risk factors:

- a personal history of colorectal cancer or adenomatous polyps
- a strong family history of colorectal cancer or polyps (cancer or polyps in a first-degree relative [parent, sibling, or child] younger than 60 or in 2 first-degree relatives of any age)
- a personal history of chronic inflammatory bowel disease
- a family history of an hereditary colorectal cancer syndrome (familial adenomatous polyposis or hereditary non-polyposis colon cancer)

Remember, one of the most powerful weapons in preventing colorectal cancer is regular colorectal cancer screening or testing. From the time the first abnormal cells start to grow, it usually takes about 10 to 15 years for them to develop into colorectal cancer. Since some colorectal cancers can't be prevented, finding the disease early is your best defense.

Learn about the CDC's *Screen for Life* Campaign at www.cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal/sfl

FOH, the Occupational Health Provider of Choice for the Federal Government

The mission of FOH is to improve the health, safety, and productivity of the federal workforce. Created by Congress in 1946, FOH is a non-appropriated service agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Program Support Center.

Federal agencies throughout the U.S. and overseas can access FOH services. FOH provides worksite health services, Wellness/Fitness, Employee Assistance Programs (EAP), Work/Life, Environmental Health and Safety, Organizational and Professional Development, and Training and Education.

Contact FOH at **(800) 457-9808** or visit us at www.foh.dhhs.gov.
